

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2163

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT BG
SUBJ: RUMORS OF CABINET CRISIS

1. IN PAST FOUR/ FIVE DAYS DACCA HAS BEEN RIFE WITH RUMORS OF SERIOUS CRISIS IN SHEIKH MUJIB' S CABINET. BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH BRITISH AND AUSTRALIAN COLLEAGUES AS WELL AS LOCAL NEWSMEN AND POLITICAL SOURCES, SHAPE OF ALLEGED CRISIS APPEARS AS FOLLOWS: AS MANY AS FIVE CABINET MINISTERS LED BY FINMIN TAJUDDIN AHMED AND INCLUDING INDUSTRIES MIN SYED NAZRUL ISLAM, COMMUNICATIONS MIN MANSUR ALI AND COMMERCE MIN KAMARUZZAMAN HAVE SUBMITTED RESIGNATIONS TO SHEIKH IN PROTEST AGAINST ACTIVITIES OF JUBO LEAGUE LEADER SHEIKH FAZLUL HUQ MONI AND JATIYA SRAMIK LEAGUE (JSL) LEADER ABDUL MANNAN. SIMMERING ANTAGONISM BETWEEN CABINET GROUP AND MONI/ MANNAN COMBINED APPARENTLY BROKE INTO OPEN AS RESULT OF HARBASSMENT OF JUTE CORPORATION LAST WEEK BY LAL BAHINI CONTINGENTS (JSL MILITANTS). TAJUDDIN APPARENTLY SEIZED OCCASION TO

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LAUNCH SERIOUS PROTEST TO SHEIKH AGAINST
DISRUPTIVE ACTIVITIES OF MONI/ MANNAN AND THE
JATIYA SRAMIL LEAGUE. NAZRUL ISLAM APPARENTLY
JOINED ON THE GROUNDS THAT JATIYA SRAMIK LEAGUE
HAS SO DISRUPTED THE NATIONALIZED INDUSTRIES THAT
PRODUCTION AGAIN DECLINING. AS PART OF COUNTER-
ATTACK TAJUDDIN IN PRESS CONFERENCE REPORTED
MAY 12 PRESS STATED ECONOMY WAS ON POINT OF
COLLAPSE PRINCIPALLY AS RESULT OF DECLINING
PRODUCTION IN THE NATIONALIZED INDUSTRIES. HE
CALLED FOR TIGHTER LABOR DISCIPLINE IN FACTORIES AND
ALL OUT EFFORTS TO INCREASE PRODUCTION.

2. COMMENT: WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT
TENSION WITHIN CABINET IS INDEED SURFACING AGAIN
OVER BLATANT ATTEMPTS OF SHEIKH MONI NOW ALLIED
WITH JATIYA SRAMIK LEAGUE LEADER MANNAN TO
ESTABLISH HIMSELF AS HEIR APPARENT TO SHIKEYH
MUJIB. DURING PAST MONTH (SEE DACCA 1928)
MONI HAS BEEN TOURING COUNTRY ATTACKING GOVERNMENT

PRINCIPALLY BUREAUCRAFTS FOR ANTI- BANGLADESH ATTITUDES
AND CALLING FOR WHOLESAL PURGES OF THE ADMINISTRATION
AND GOVERNMENT. TAJUDDIN STATEMENT RE " ECONOMY ON
POINT OF COLLAPSE" STARTLING INDEED. IT POSSIBLE
PRIMIN MAY AVE DECIDED TO DISASSOCIATE HIMSELF
FROM PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN PREPARATION FOR FUTURS
POWER STRUGGLE. NEVERTHELESS WE STILL DOUBT THAT
TENSIONS WILL RESULT IN OPEN SPLIT AS LONG AS
SHEIKH MUJIB REMAINS EFFECTIVELY AT THE HELM.
HOWEVER RESURGENCE OF ANIMOSITIES WITHIN RULING
PARTY POSE FURTHER PROBLEMS FOR OVERBURDENED
PRIMIN. LOCAL NEWS EDITOR WHO SAW SHEIKH ON
MAY 12 REPORTED TO EMBOFF THAT PRIMIN IS DISTURBED
OVER TRENDS AND OVERWHELMED BY MAGNITUDE OF
PROBLEMS FACING COUNTRY. HE CHARACTERIZED SHEIKH
AS " SINKING AND DEPRESSED". OTHER SOURCES CONFIRM
THAT IN PAST SEVERAL WEEKS PRIMIN HAS SEEMED
PSYCHOLOGICALLY DEPRESSED.
NEWBERRY

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